Name/Pronoun Use and Instruction on Gender/Sexuality Topics Policy

Purpose

To provide clear guidance to school staff on how to respond to student requests for preferred names or pronouns and how to handle instructional content dealing primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality, in a way that aligns with provincial law (Bill 27) while also respecting student well-being, privacy, and school values.

Policy Statements & Procedures

1. **Definitions & Scope**
   a. A "new preferred name or pronouns" refers to a name or pronouns a student requests to be addressed by that differ from their legal name or pronouns and which are connected to gender identity.
   b. "Subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality" means content whose main focus is those topics (not incidental or brief reference).
   c. Incidental references in lessons (e.g. a passing comment or acknowledgement) are not subject to the parental notification/consent rules under Bill 27.

2. **Name / Pronoun Requests by Students**
   a. If a student wishes to use a different name or pronouns on the basis of their gender identity:
   i. For students under 16 years old:
   • The school will notify the parent or legal guardian in writing that the student wishes to use a new name or pronouns.
   • The school will obtain parental consent before staff (teachers, administrators, support staff) may begin to use the new name or pronouns in school settings.
   ii. For students aged 16 or 17:
   • The school will notify the parent or legal guardian in writing of the student's preferences.
   • No parental consent is required; but the staff will not use the new name or pronouns until notification has been made.
   b. Written notification to parents will include a clear statement of the student's preference and the implications for school use.

c. Before parental notification, if the school reasonably expects that such disclosure might cause psychological or emotional harm to the student, or at the student's request, the school will provide counselling or other support to the student.
d. Staff will not begin using the new name or pronouns until the parent notification (and in the case of under-16, the consent) steps have been completed.
e. If parental consent is denied (for a student under 16), the staff will continue to use the student's legal name and pronouns. The school will continue to provide support, including counselling, and revisit the matter if circumstances change.

3. **Instruction/Curriculum & External Resources on Gender/Sexuality**
   a. If the school plans to deliver instruction or use teaching materials whose subject matter deals primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality, then:
      i. The school will notify parents or legal guardians in writing of the planned instruction or resource use.
      ii. The parents will be given the opportunity to opt their child in (i.e. affirmative consent), rather than default inclusion.
      iii. The notice will be provided in advance (e.g. at least 30 days) before the instruction or use of the material.
   b. Learning resources that deal primarily and explicitly with these topics will have ministerial approval.
   c. External parties (e.g. guest speakers, external providers) who bring resources or presentations that deal primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality will also have ministerial approval.
   d. The school will maintain records of parental responses (opt-in decisions) and communication.

4. **Privacy, Confidentiality, and Student Supports**
   a. The school will treat a student's gender identity, requests for a name/pronoun change, or involvement in sexuality/gender instruction with care and confidentiality to the extent possible, balancing legal reporting obligations.
   b. Staff will minimize disclosure of sensitive information to those who do not need to know.
   c. The school will provide referral or counselling, mental health support, or trusted staff to assist students, especially in the context of risk or where parental notification may cause harm.

5. **Implementation, Communication & Training**
   a. All staff will be familiarized with the legal requirements under Bill 27 and how they interact with human rights standards (e.g. Alberta Human Rights Act) and professional responsibilities.
   b. The school will publish clear policies, procedures, and forms (for notifications, consent, recordkeeping) so that staff and parents understand the process.
   c. The school will review and update existing policies that conflict with this procedure to ensure consistency.
   d. The school will monitor and revisit the policy as regulations or further guidance from Alberta Education emerge.